

The bottom line here is production royalties from Federal lands and waters are owed to the American people. For the last 6 years under the Bush administration, the oil and gas industry has been pampered by friends in high places.

Consider this: From 2002 to 2005, collections of oil and gas royalties from drilling rigs on public lands have fallen to an annual average of \$48 million—half the average, \$115 million, collected annually in the 20 years prior, despite increased production.

Consider this: Between 1998 and 2001, the Minerals Management Service, MMS, conducted over 540 audits per year. From 2002 through 2005, the average number of audits dropped to 393. And in 2006, MMS completed only 144 audits. That means that MMS reduced the number of oil and gas audits by 22 percent.

By comparison, The New York Times reported recently that the IRS has more than doubled the number of individual tax returns audited from 2000 to 2006, increasing from nearly 618,000 to nearly 1.3 million of us whom IRS decided to scrutinize.

So here we have oil and gas companies raking in profits and getting a wink and a nod when it comes to paying the royalties they owe, while the IRS knuckles down to squeeze every possible nickel and dime out of regular folks and hardworking families. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

From the earliest days of this administration when energy executives, or their representatives, gathered behind the curtains of executive privilege shrouding the Vice President's office, the energy policy of this Nation has been tilted against the regular folks most of us in this body represent. These huge, multinational firms would seem to be the least in need of coddling by and protection of our government, yet, the policies of this administration have sheltered them from "ponying up" their fair share of what is truly owed to the Federal Treasury. At a time when the oil and gas industry is reaping record profits, consumers at the pump are watching the price figures flip by at increasing speed as the quantity of gas they actually pour hums ever more slowly into the tank.

We have an opportunity here, in H.R. 2337, to make some real and positive changes—to even out the policies so slanted in favor of the oil company executives whose nameplates appear at Mr. CHENEY's energy bargaining table. We have the chance to restore some accountability to the system and improve the way the Federal Government manages its public energy resources.

H.R. 2337 will step up the number of audits performed each year and give the agency the teeth it has long needed to go after those companies that underpay the Treasury at the expense of the rest of us.

Madam Speaker, every year over Memorial Day weekend we have a tall tales contest in my home State of West Virginia. That event draws some of the biggest fibbers and spinners the Lord has seen fit to create. Having listened to the bizarre claims ricocheting around these halls in recent weeks, I look forward to next Memorial Day when I expect to see a string of oil and gas executives taking the stage to share their whoppers.

The winner of this time-honored contest, by the way, is awarded an enviable trophy—a golden shovel. What a nice—and appro-

priate—decoration for the walls of some mighty oil company CEO.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF LIVES LOST IN CYPRUS DURING THE TURKISH INVASION

HON. MIKE MCINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Mr. MCINTYRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in commemoration of the 33rd anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, which occurred on July 20, 1974. Many lost their lives and livelihoods as a result of that invasion. It is disappointing that 33 years later the island of Cyprus remains divided and contentious.

A United Nations Security Council resolution states "a Cyprus settlement must be based on a State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty and international personality and a single citizenship, with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded and comprising two politically equal communities as described in the relevant Security Council resolutions, in a bi-communal and bi-zonal federation and that such a settlement must exclude union in whole or in part with any other country or any form of partition or secession." I look forward to the day when such a settlement is realized.

Cyprus has been a staunch ally of the United States. It has aided our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq by allowing the United States over-flight and landing rights, as well as port access for our ships. In addition, Cyprus provided valuable assistance for our evacuation and rescue efforts after the 1983 Beirut barracks bombing and the 2006 hostilities in Lebanon.

Also, it is important that we ensure the protection of human rights in Cyprus and work to preserve the Cypriots' religious and cultural heritage. I am troubled by reports that religious sites, including Greek Orthodox churches, have been pillaged, destroyed, or in any way harmed.

I am encouraged that efforts are underway to facilitate the integration of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, specifically the opening of crossing points on this divided island. After 33 years of division and contention, it is time to reach a just and lasting peace that will unify Cyprus and allow it to grow politically, socially, and economically. I encourage my colleagues to support any efforts to reach such a settlement.

PEACE FOR GREEK AND TURKISH CYPRIOTS

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today with the hope that the Island of Cyprus will soon be reunified, and with resolve of her citizens and the help from the international community, both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots will know tranquility.

Tragically, thirty-three years ago, violence and bloodshed ripped Cyprus apart, dividing

the island. Although it is peaceful today, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots are still separated to the detriment of many Turkish Cypriots, who have been deprived of economic and social advancements.

Unfortunately, decades of negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations and involving motherlands Greece and Turkey, have produced no lasting agreement. There was hope in April 2004 when the comprehensive, U.N.-sponsored "Annan Plan," was put to referendum. To the dismay of the international community, this plan failed when the Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly voted against it, despite the fact that the Turkish Cypriots overwhelmingly voted in favor of it.

After the unsuccessful adoption of the "Annan Plan," Turkish Cypriots called for action to discuss the situation. It was then that Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat and Greek Cypriot leader Tassos Papadopoulos met on July 3rd and 8th, 2006, and agreed to hold further meetings based on a "Set of Principles" aimed at the unification of Cyprus. The meeting of the two leaders and the agreement they reached have been welcomed by the international community, including the United States, the European Union and others.

It is important that this new and positive spirit demonstrated by the two Cypriot leaders be supported by the United States in order to help the parties build trust and forge an atmosphere conducive to progress and prosperity. It is our sincere hope that the spirit of reconciliation and goodwill generated in recent times will continue to be promoted by all parties involved.

Madam Speaker, as the process moves forward it is also important to recognize the resolve of the Turkish Cypriot people who have demonstrated time after time an unwavering commitment to reconciliation as well as remarkable flexibility by supporting the "Annan Plan." Despite their continued commitment to reunify Cyprus, Turkish Cypriots are still awaiting the fulfillment of the promises made to them by the international community that their isolation would be lifted. We believe that both the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey, whose support was crucial in securing the "yes" vote of the Turkish Cypriots in the 2004 referendum, should be rewarded, not penalized, in order for the process to move forward toward a lasting settlement.

More than ever before, it is important to support a diplomatic compromise in Cyprus to ensure a bright future for Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

TRIBUTE TO DR. WILSON WEST

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Dr. Wilson West. Dr. West is a native of Belleville, IL, and was a well-known doctor and professor.

Dr. West was born near Centralia on September 13, 1913 and graduated from Salem High School. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. In 1937 he graduated from St. Louis University Medical School. Dr. West was a member of the St. Clair County Medical Society and served as its president in 1971. He

also served on the Board of Directors of the Union Bank of St. Clair County for 25 years.

Dr. West was an active member and leader in the Republican Party and was viewed by many as the foremost authority on the Republican Party in southwestern Illinois. He served as chairman of the St. Clair County Republican Century Club for more than 25 years, elected as a delegate at seven Republican National Conventions, and was an Elector in the Electoral College for three presidential elections. He was very active in local, State, and national politics and hosted prominent politicians at St. Clair County events. He was proud to have attended the inaugurations of many presidents and governors and was a frequent guest at the Governor's Mansion and the White House.

Dr. West wrote for medical research journals and was a professor at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine, and Barnes Hospital. Dr. West is the namesake and past recipient of the St. Clair County Medical Society's Wilson H. West Award for service in the health care profession. He was honored as an "outstanding alumnus" by the St. Louis University School of Medicine. In 1966, he received the Everett Dirksen Award and subsequently established a Nursing Scholarship with the same organization. In 2002, Dr. West was awarded the prestigious Eisenhower Commission. He was awarded lifetime membership on the Republican National Committee, the honorary organizations, Republican Speaker's Circle, and the Presidents Club.

Dr. West leaves a legacy to his patients of 60 years of service with dedicated professionalism and compassionate care. He touched many lives with his understanding, care, and concern. He provided outstanding treatment and service to three generations of southwestern Illinoisans.

My thoughts and prayers will be with the family and friends of Dr. Wilson West.

TRIBUTE TO BEECHIE BROOKS

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a community leader and real estate and economic development visionary of the 4th Congressional District, Beechie Brooks.

Beechie Brooks' vision was instrumental in revitalizing and changing the character of neighborhoods in Milwaukee's central city by developing the Halyard Park subdivision. The United Realty Group, a firm that was formed from the merger of several African American real estate companies in 1976, gained approval from the City of Milwaukee's Redevelopment Authority to develop a subdivision of single-family suburban style homes. Mr. Brooks' leadership was integral to creating this "model" of privately financed housing in the central city that continues to draw the attention of people in urban areas around the country. It serves as a testament to the fact that central cities can provide the same quality of life as suburbs.

Beechie Brooks did not rest on his laurels but continued to spearhead development in

the community including: assisted in the development of the Northtown Shopping Center on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and North Avenue which has been renamed Brooks Plaza in his honor; designed and built Brook's X-Press Car Washing Plant on 7th Street and W. North Avenue; oversaw the development of the Masterpiece Supper Club and Motor Lodge on 6th and W. Walnut Streets; and was a founder and treasurer of the state's second oldest African American-owned financial institution, the North Milwaukee State Bank. Mr. Brooks also served on the City of Milwaukee's Board of Assessment, the Wisconsin Real Estate License Examining Board and the NAACP Milwaukee Chapter's Executive Board and chaired their Housing Committee.

Mr. Brooks was devoted to his wife of 58 years, Vernadine who passed away in 2004. They were both active members of St. Mark AME Church. He was instrumental in planning and constructing the building the church currently occupies and continues to serve on St. Mark's Trustee Board that manages the church's real estate holdings. Mr. Brooks is also a member of the Anvil Housing Board which manages the church's two senior citizen housing complexes.

I am honored to have this opportunity to pay tribute to Beechie Brooks for his unwavering commitment to making Milwaukee a great place to live and work.

PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE COOPERATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 980, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007. This vital legislation will provide police officers, firefighters, and other public safety officers with basic collective bargaining rights, without undermining state authority or existing state laws—providing modest minimum standards to be included in state laws.

Sadly, some members of this body object to H.R. 980 on the grounds that it supposedly "tramples on state's rights." This could not be further from the truth. The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act only requires that states and localities have a bargaining process, it does not mandate binding arbitration, it does not allow strikes, and local employers still retain the final say in all budgetary decisions. Furthermore, most states and localities already meet or exceed the bill's minimum requirement of having a process in place that allows police, firefighters and others sit down and talk about their jobs with their employers. For these reasons, it seems to me that the state's rights objections raised by the bill's opponents do not stand up under scrutiny.

Congress has long recognized the benefits of a cooperative working relationship between labor and management. Over the years we have extended collective bargaining rights to letter carriers, postal clerks, public transit employees, and even Congressional employees. It is long past time that we allow public safety

employees the basic right to bargain collectively and raise workplace and public safety issues with their employers and in passing H.R. 980 today we will correct this wrong.

TRIBUTE TO THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY OF EDWARDSVILLE COUGARS SOFTBALL TEAM

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor my alma mater Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville, where I graduated with my MBA in 1997, on winning its first national NCAA Division II softball championship.

The fifth ranked Cougars (49–8) closed out the season with a 16-game winning streak. The 3-hour and 15 minute game was the longest in Division II championship history.

Ashley Price hit an RBI single in the 12th inning to give SIUE a 3–2 championship victory over defending national champion Lock Haven at Firestone Stadium in Akron, OH. The national championship is the 17th in the school's history and first in softball.

Members of the team include Ashley Price, Chaleen Rumpf, Carly Wildenrad, Emily Lenart, Courtney Mall, Lindsey Laas, Haylee Eubanks, Abbie Bates, Katy Biggs, Nicole Beecher, Lauren Zembruksi, Sabra McCune, Amanda Puce, Jodie Ohlau, Kaeleigh Rousey, Libby Lenart, Mallory Ruggles and Kaitlin Colosimo. The Head Coach is Sandy Montgomery; Valerie McCoy is the Assistant Coach, and the Student Assistant is Shannon Evans.

I am very pleased to congratulate the softball team of Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville on their national championship and wish them the best of luck for next season.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANT TESTIMONY OF MR. CHARLES DAHAN BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, June 20, 2007, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held an extraordinary briefing on Morocco's progress toward gender equality.

The briefing addressed the very important issue of women's rights in Morocco that has been the number one priority of King Mohammed VI. The Moudawana (the Family Law), adopted in 2003, has sought to raise women's status as full partners with men, in order to uphold equality between the two spouses and to protect children's rights. Women are now able to initiate divorce and to gain custody of their children. Polygamy has become practically impossible.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Charles Dahan, the World Vice President of the Federation of the Moroccan Jewry, shared his exceptional